

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
DRAFT Minutes of May 5, 2015 special meeting

Members present: Al Cyr (chair), Ed. Hall, Kathleen Paterson, Shep Stearns, Vicky Wetherell, Jennifer Kaufman (staff).

Meeting was called to order at 7:05.

Vicky was appointed acting secretary.

Minutes of the April 7, 2015 meeting were approved.

Old Business

Pollinator Program Jennifer gave the committee an update and posters to distribute for the May 26 program cosponsored by Agriculture Committees/Commissions of Mansfield and nearby towns.

Signage, Next Steps Kathleen reported on a Traffic Authority meeting concerning our request to post farm safety signs and farm educational signs. As requested by the Commission, the committee identified locations where farm safety signs, such as the standard tractor sign, are recommended. The committee will ask the Traffic Commission for authorization for these signs, then request that the Town Council provide funding for purchasing and installing them. Jennifer suggested applying for a state Farm Viability grant to fund educational signs (November deadline)..

Walktober Jennifer reported that a Walktober tour sponsored by the committee at Twin Ponds Pond will be held on October 18 at 1 PM.

Browns Road/Coventry Road Subdivision Update Jennifer reported on several committee recommendations for open space dedications and conservation easements, which arose on the previous field trip and joint committees meeting with the developers.

New Business

Zoning Review Jennifer provided copies of the existing Agricultural Uses zoning regulations, which the committee had worked on a few years ago. As part of the current revision of the entire zoning regulations, the committee can recommend any further revisions. The committee supported keeping the regulations without revision except the table for animal density. They recommend that the categories for small poultry, large poultry and rabbits be removed from the table to allow the keeping of these small animals on lots of less than an acre.

Communications Jennifer reported to the committee concerning odor complaints on Bassetts Bridge Road resulting from an application of chicken manure on the Commonfields and on a privately owned hayfield. It was suggested that the committee's outreach projects could include information for residents concerning what to expect throughout the farming season.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05.